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ABSTRACT

This document consists of three issues from 2000 of a journal highlighting notable after-school programs, many funded by 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants, and the school-community collaboration they entail. The June 2000 issue features a cover story on the successful inclusion of parents in various after-school initiatives; this issue also contains related descriptions of programs at Heritage High School in Harlem and in Jackson, Mississippi. The October 2000 issue features a cover story on collaboration in after-school programs, along with articles describing partnership programs in San Juan County, New Mexico; Barre, Vermont; and San Antonio, Texas. The December 2000 issue's cover story addresses business-school collaboration in after-school programs and also contains descriptions of such initiatives in Santa Anna, California; DeKalb County, Georgia; and Guilford, Maine. (EV)

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Making After School Count:
Communities & Schools Working Together, 2000

Ann Yost

Volume 3, Numbers 1-3

June-December 2000

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Afterschool Programs Can Open the Doors for Parent Involvement

By ANN YOST

When the school day ends at Sam Houston Elementary School in McAllen, Texas, the children don't leave the building. Instead, they rush out to work in Houstonville, a micro-society.

The young workers are trained at the beginning of each school year by professionals from the community. So when the Houstonville community comes alive every weekday afternoon, the bank, post office, newspaper office, Internal Revenue Service and Target are staffed with elementary students with experience and know-how.

Houstonville even has a fifth-grade mayor who represents the afterschool program at various meetings in the real town of McAllen. Citizens of Houstonville receive "Cougar" dollars, which can be spent on items from Target and also at periodic school markets that feature student-made items.

The community is divided by grade.

"For example," said Principal Connie Mashwari, "second-graders run the post office. They work in three shifts and, with the right stamp, you can get overnight delivery within Houstonville."

Parents join their children at an afterschool program.

Houstonville was developed because

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Miriam Bacot (in black) teaches dance at Harlem's Heritage High School.

"When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life."
Study

Sam Houston's largely Latino populace was concerned about job preparation for their children. The parents asked for an afterschool program that would teach job skills and responsibility. They work with school staff in planning afterschool activities, and they provide the volunteer force for most everything the micro-society needs.

"There is no doubting the importance of parental involvement in our school and afterschool program," Mashwari said.

Meanwhile, for two years in Mississippi, Gloria Young rose before dawn to arrive at Brown Elementary School in downtown Jackson by 6:30 a.m. As a "Helping Hand Parent," she volunteered daily to care for children waiting for school to open.

"With welfare reform, the mothers in our community were going back to work, and there was no one to watch the children before school," Young said. "Our school is right on the street. We would take care of the kids, fix their clothes, comfort them if they were crying, read books to them. We'd get them ready to go to school, as if we were their mothers."

And for Miriam Bacot, a professional dance teacher who provides dance instruction in the extended-day program of Harlem's Heritage High School in New York City, the benefits of parental involvement are seen close to home.

"Through the medium of exercise and dance, I am teaching adolescents about teamwork, work ethic and the passion to learn," she said. "They, in turn, have sensitized me to be a better parent by teaching me to really listen to my teenage son."

Benefits Documented

The importance of parent involvement in the schools was highlighted in 1966 by researcher J.S. Coleman's report, "Equality of Educational Opportunity," which listed the roles of the family and the home environment as the strongest determining factors of children's academic progress.

In 1994, researchers Nancy Berla and Anne Henderson wrote: "The evidence is now beyond dispute. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life."

Educational benefits of a supportive home and family can include higher grades

and test scores, better school attendance, higher graduation rates, greater enrollment in post-secondary education, and more positive attitudes about school.

Even so, parental involvement like that occurring at Sam Houston, Brown and Heritage is rare.

"Parents, especially economically disadvantaged parents, are often apprehensive about making contact with school staff," said Karen Mapp, a researcher for the Institute for Responsive Education at Harvard University. "They may feel they have no business talking to 'education experts.'"

Other obstacles include work schedules, lack of child care and transportation. Yet another factor is the failure of school staff to recognize or legitimize the parents' role in education.

Mapp studied the Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School in Boston, an urban public school with a 90 percent parent involvement rate, in an effort to discover how to overcome the barriers to such involvement.

From interviews and observations over three years, Mapp learned that the O'Hearn staff created an environment and culture in which families had joined the school community. Parents said they felt like members of the O'Hearn family, a feeling that motivated them to participate in home and school academic activities.

O'Hearn has a Family Outreach Program in which parent volunteers visit new families to welcome them. There is a family center in the school for refreshments and conversation. The school holds periodic workshops and forums on educational topics and a welcoming event called the "New Family Breakfast." All are designed to make parents feel welcome.

O'Hearn parents say they also are encouraged and supported by the principal and staff to work on committees and projects and are often paired with more experienced volunteers. Parents are honored for any and all contributions — from reading aloud to children in an afterschool program to offering ideas at a PTA meeting.

"Sometimes, all it takes is that first indication that the school wants you to be involved," Mapp said. "It can start with something as simple as planting tulips in front of the building or reading a story to children. The school is saying, 'Let's ease into this relationship.' And then — through exposure to other parents — some parents will get more involved in governance or volunteering."

"There are three principles that we follow here at the school that I think are key in planning family activities," O'Hearn Principal William Henderson said. "You want to have some food, have some fun and always have a focus on the children. We do these things to build good will and trust, to make families feel welcome here."

Heritage Principal Susan Bartolone and Cathleen Kiebert-Gruen, director of extended-day and community programs, used Henderson's three principles to attract parents to the Harlem-based school. Bartolone and Kiebert-Gruen added a twist, however, when they divided those in attendance into small "Community Conversations."

"We had trained parents as facilitators and teachers as recorder for the conversations," Kiebert-Gruen said. "We

Web Site Redesigned

Check out Mott's 21st Century Community Learning Centers Web site at **www.mott.org/21stcentury**. This portion of the site has been recently redesigned for easier navigation. You will find information on the 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, afterschool poll results, Mott afterschool list serv information and much more.

"There are three principles that we follow here at the school that I think are key in planning family activities. You want to have some food, have some fun and always have a focus on the children."

Principal William Henderson

wanted to find out what the parents' dreams were for the school and for the extended day."

Parents and teachers have volunteered to work on some of the issues that surfaced, and more Community Conversations are planned for the future.

"The participation was fantastic," Heritage PTA President Zakiyyah Jefferson said. "Because of the small interest in PTA and the overwhelming interest in the Community Conversations, this format could eventually take over policy decisionmaking for the PTA."

Opportunities Abound

Unlike the more structured, standard school day, most afterschool programs have more flexibility and can reflect more easily the interests of the community and the individual needs and interests of the students.

"Afterschool programs can become the most interesting, creative part of the day," said Sister Judy Donovan of Valley Interfaith, an organizing partner of the Sam Houston School in McAllen, Texas. "They can equally involve parents, reinforce core curriculum, create experimental learning conditions and engage children who are not involved in other extracurricular activities."

While Houstonville was developed as an afterschool program, it is having an impact on all student learning and activities.

"We're using it to reinforce the core curriculum as well as to develop leadership, problem-solving, presentation and conflict resolution skills," Principal Mashwari said. Representatives from Valley Interfaith have worked with Sam Houston for seven years.

"We start every year with house meetings, and the topics of most interest and concern to the parents move to the PTA. From there, we make a campus plan," Mashwari said.

"When we started Houstonville in 1996, our school had just relocated to a newly created affordable housing area. Parents were concerned about getting and keeping jobs so they could pay for their new home. They wanted their children taught how to set goals and achieve them."

House meetings bring parents into the education process by developing local leadership and presenting opportunities for the parents to serve as educational resources.

"One year the parents wanted to do more with Posada, a Mexican festival, during afterschool time," Mashwari said. "Parents offered ... to divide the elements of the festival among their homes. One family put up a piñata, another baked special bread. The children moved from home to home to learn about Posada."

In Jackson, Mississippi, Principal Hazel Shields said the presence of parents at Brown Elementary confers a type of blessing on the school, which is the recipient of a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Seeing other parents from the neighborhood can help bridge the gap between the familiarity of the neighborhood and the isolation of the school, she said.

Meanwhile, in Chicago, a citizen-based organization, Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), has worked with Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform and local residents to bring hundreds of parents into four neighborhood schools since the spring of 1995.

"Logan Square is one of the best examples in the country of organizing around an afterschool program," said Cross City's Chris Brown, director of schools and community programs. The neighborhood schools were overcrowded, and the school district agreed to build an annex to the school buildings. LSNA convinced officials to build separate buildings so they eventually could be used for community centers in the afternoon and evening after the regular schools closed.

Once the buildings were finished, LSNA worked with three elementary schools to develop a parent-mentor program in order to supply a stream of volunteers for the afterschool program.

"Parents got 10 hours of leadership training, then worked at least 100 hours in the schools, getting additional training from teachers. They were paid a stipend for the 100 hours, but most of them worked many more hours than that," said Susan Adler Yanum, education organizer at LSNA.

"The parent-mentors have become a wonderful resource for the teachers. The work they've done in the afterschool program has made teaching more effective during the regular day.

"And bringing the parents into the schools is so good for kids. They are so proud their mom is taking time to come into the school. It also has a huge impact on the kids getting the benefit of the parent mentoring. A lot of time, the parent volunteers have more time to listen to kids than their teacher does."

In schools with the parent-mentor program, discipline, homework completion and grades have improved, according to Adler Yanum.

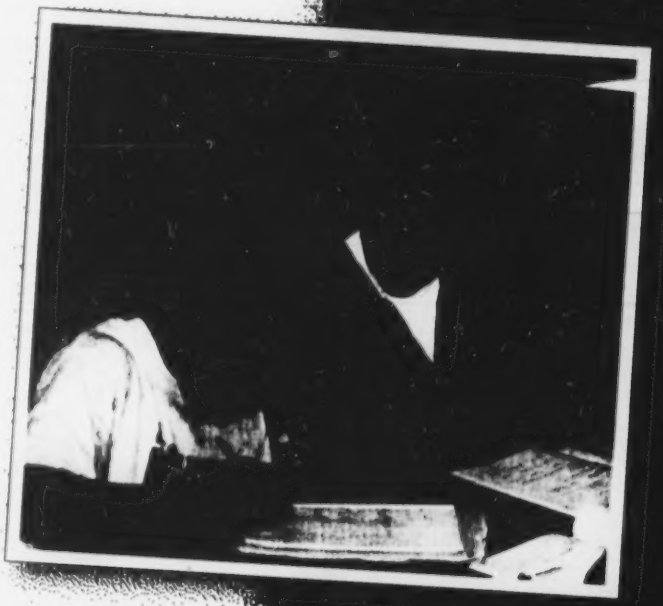
Another strength of the program is that it has built ownership of parents in the community centers. One center is run by a group of parent-mentors. Other parent-mentors have gone on to serve on local school councils, accept jobs in education, return to their own schooling and create afterschool classes. "This program has ... really contributed to the sustainability of the afterschool programs, too," Adler Yanum said.

Demand for Excellence

The Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), like Valley Interfaith, is composed of local congregations and school communities. WIN has worked with four parent groups to set up afterschool programs in their schools. It mobilized a constituency that secured a commitment from D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams to create a fund for afterschool programs. Of the $30 million promised, $15 million has been allocated in FY 2000.

"Afterschool is a way to engage people around their self interest," WIN Director Martin Trimble said. "It's a way to build loyalty and to develop talent. Then we engage parents in a broader conversation about what they would like to see changed in the schools."

Similarly, Child First Authority has worked with parents and schools to develop nine afterschool programs in Baltimore.



Parents can provide one-on-one homework assistance.

"Afterschool programs can become the most interesting, creative part of the day. They can equally involve parents, reinforce core curriculum, create experimental learning conditions and engage children who are not involved in other extracurricular activities."

Sister Judy Donovan

"Part of what we do is listen to what parents, teachers and church members have to say, train them to work together, help them build relationships, and find the local leaders. It's when people come together that things emerge," Director Carol Reckling said.

"We are building a demand for excellent programs with our elementaries. We have a group of young people who are going to be accustomed to certain enrichment experiences, such as art, computer time, trips to museums. The parents who have benefited from these activities will want to continue them in middle school. Ultimately, we want to create a feeder system that will truly prepare young people for college."

She said one of Child First's requirements is a volunteer adult for each child in a program. There are more than 80 teachers and hundreds of volunteers in the afterschool programs.

"Our statement of belief is that having parents actively engaged in schools is going to increase the educational outcome," Reckling said. "Parents volunteering in afterschool activities, both as in-school volunteers and as decisionmakers, improves regular day education."

According to Sam Houston's Mashwari, "we've learned about engagement and involvement of parents and creating a school community versus just a school within its own four walls."

Added Valley Interfaith's Donovan:

"These groups are not formed just to respond to a crisis. They are people with a passion and interest in improving education for young people.

"There are lots of parents with talents.

"The parent-mentors have become a wonderful resource for the teachers. The work they've done in the afterschool program has made teaching more effective during the regular day."

Susan Adler Yanum

Finding them is the easy part. The hard part is building political will and finding the funding. What we've usually done is make it a local political issue so that cities and school districts invest in this."

That's what happened in McAllen, where Valley Interfaith campaigned for and won a 0.5 percent sales tax, half of which is designated for afterschool programs.

Afterschool programs offer a world of opportunities for parents to deepen their engagement in their child's world. Whether campaigning, baking, answering the phone, organizing, planting gardens, reading stories or just listening to their own children at home, parents are critical partners in the education process. And that has an impact on children.

"When a child sees his or her parent involved in school, it sends a powerful message," said Heritage's Bartolone. "Just checking the homework every night tells your children that you care about school."

Community Conversations Activate Parents in Harlem

In 1997, when Heritage High School opened its doors on a floor of Harlem's Julia de Burgos Latino Cultural Center, its staff was ready and willing to add to students' educational gains by creating partnerships with parents and community groups.

After all, the school itself is a collaborative effort of the New York City Board of Education and Columbia University Teachers College. Getting parents involved, however, hasn't always been easy.

The concept of Heritage came from Judith Burton, chair of the Arts and Humanities Department at the college. Burton wanted to offer students a comprehensive academic curriculum within a context of cultural arts, community partnerships and an extended-day program. A majority of Heritage's staff members are involved in advanced degree studies at Columbia.

"The extended day, in particular, provides a door through which to bring community and parents into the life of the school and a way for students to learn and connect with the community," Burton said.

"We have always been in telephone contact with the parents because we're a small school (247 students)," said Heritage Principal Susan Bartolone. "However we'd hold a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting and three people would come."

Heritage draws most of its students from Central Harlem, East Harlem (also known as El Barrio) and Washington Heights. Families — 60 percent Latino and 40 percent African American — have chosen to send their children to the school. However, barriers of time, language and intimidation kept parents from coming to the school.

"We knew the partnerships were important," said Cathleen Kiebert-Gruen, director of extended-day and community programs. "Part of the value of the extended day is that it provides the opportunity to bring community and parents into the educational process. In addition, we offered computer classes and business training for community members in the evening, but we still weren't getting any parent involvement in the schools."

During a brainstorming session, according to PTA President Zakiyyah Jefferson, a handful of parents, Bartolone and Kiebert-Gruen decided to hold an open house focused on performances, displays and readings by students. They billed the event as "Get to Know Your School Night" and had it

Cathleen Kiebert-Gruen (left) and Susan Bartolone.

"The extended day ... provides a door through which to bring community and parents into the life of the school and a way for students to learn and connect with the community."

Judith Barton

"The extended day is critical for the children and getting parents involved is critical, too, so it is critical that the extended day is parent-friendly."

Parent Miriam Bacot

catered. The open house was held in October 1999 in a gallery on the first floor of the cultural center. The event was a dazzling success that drew more than 150 people and included student performances by the Latin Jazz Band, dancers and karate students; readings of original poetry; and art displays. Coordinators decided to hold another open house in December called "Community Conversations." To do it right, Bartolone, Kiebert-Gruen and Assistant Principal Peter Dillon brought in trainers to work with selected parents and teachers on recording and facilitation skills. After dinner and a performance by the Latin jazz band, parents and teachers divided the participants into groups of 10 to 12.

The Latin jazz band is directed by Jesus Santiago.

The objectives were to empower the parents, to get their ideas about what programs to offer and to encourage them to become involved."

Among the parent facilitators were John Rosario, Miriam Bacot and Jefferson.

"It was a fabulous experience," Jefferson said. "Parents were able to express the concerns they had and what they hope for their kids. I had volunteered in the classroom for my children before, but this was the first time I got into the PTA. I did it because it was a new school and I thought there would be a good chance for my ideas to get heard." Rosario, whose son travels several hours each day to attend Heritage, is bilingual. He served as facilitator for the Spanish-speaking group of parents.

"I think the school is trying to make the Spanish-speaking people feel welcome. But it is harder with the language barrier. Many of these parents who are recent immigrants have only a second- or third-grade education. They are shy about school," he said.

"[But] they said they want more information and more contact with the school. They don't want to just be handed a report card. They want to know more about how their kid is doing."

Rosario said he would like to see Heritage offer night programs specifically for grandparents.

"Many children in the community are now being raised by their grandparents. It is even harder for them to become involved in school."

Coming out of the conversations, coordinators learned that parent concerns were academic and safety-based, said Kiebert-Gruen.

"College and career counseling was first, then homework support and safety. The parents said they did not want kids walking home alone during the day or even in a group at night."

Parents also requested more contact with teachers, more bilingual programs and assurance that all factions of the community would be represented in decisionmaking. Thanks to the teacher/recorders, highlights of the conversations were printed and distributed in the community.

"We plan to hold more Community Conversations," Bartolone said. "We'll be working toward... where the parents' agendas feed into the policy issues and decisions about what should be offered in the extended-day program."

In the meantime, the staff is now working on improving communications, supporting students academically and involving the whole community by including businesses and other community groups in the school.

Bacot, a Heritage parent who teaches elsewhere in New York, has taken on the job of teaching dance in the extended-day program. Her involvement with the school, she said, has been very rewarding in spite of the initial reluctance of the students to attend and of Latinas to work with African Americans.

However, Bacot is concerned for the future of today's children, in part, because of the lack of parent involvement in their lives.

"There is low motivation these days for academic achievement. So much of what society says is 'add water and stir'; you don't need to put in much time or energy to attain anything. The role models are rap artists and basketball players, jobs that don't require an education. The home life of today's kids is unsupervised. The extended day is critical for the children and getting parents involved is critical, too, so it is critical that the extended day is parent-friendly."

Benjamin and Marion Barber attend "Art for Parents" with their children.

Bacot has hope that Heritage will become a model school because of its extended day program.

"Heritage has made a big effort to involve community as part of the learning experience of school by working with arts organizations, community-based organizations and by holding these 'Get to Know Your School ' nights."

Jefferson agreed.

"Heritage is making people feel that we are one big community and one big family."

— YOST

"Heritage is making people feel that we are one big community and one big family."

PTA President Zakiyyah Jefferson

Jackson Seeks to Build Centers for Community

> ***"There's no way that the community can be separated from the school. When the community doesn't know what's going on behind the school doors, you can't move academics ahead."***
>
> **Principal Wilbur Walters**

During the 1990s, parents in Jackson, Mississippi, were concerned about their children spending unsupervised time after school. And educators were concerned about low academic results. The creation of afterschool programs in the midtown schools addressed both concerns in an area that is 85 percent low income.

As the 21st century dawns, Jackson's afterschool programs are seeking to evolve into something more. Today, there is recognition that educational results depend not only on the health of children, but also on the health of their families and community. Two 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grants from the U.S. Department of Education are helping to turn these inner-city schools into community centers.

"There's no way that the community can be separated from the school," said Wilbur Walters, principal of Walton Elementary School, one of four 21st CCLC sites in Jackson. "When the community doesn't know what's going on behind the school doors, you can't move academics ahead."

Brown Elementary School has been a 21st CCLC site for nearly two years. Its afterschool program provides extra help in all the core academic courses, as well as sports, arts, drama and computer time.

"We are trying to bring parents and families into the school as well as our

Brown PTA President Tony Collins and his family.

community partners. We know that having parents and neighbors in the schools makes children feel more comfortable. When kids see their parents interacting with teachers, they see the teachers as real people, and that gives teachers a more human side," Brown Principal Hazel Shields said.

"In addition, we partner with three churches in buying school uniforms. We also have a community clothes closet, a GED program and computer classes.

"As we've sought partners for the afterschool program, we are doing it with an eye to building community, strengthening

the school and the people, and getting the people in the neighborhood mentally healthy. In order for academics to bloom, we have to give support to all the other parts of a child's life."

Said David Campbell, assistant principal at Rowan Middle School: "It is important that parents be involved in every aspect of a child's life. So, of course, it is important that they be involved in the afterschool program."

Another link between the afterschool program and the community is that schools try to hire parents for job openings.

"When you hire a parent, that parent talks about the school and the program at church and at the grocery store," Campbell said. "That forms more links."

Dorothy Gater, 21st CCLC site coordinator at Rowan and parent of a Rowan student, said the afterschool program, with its certified teachers and teacher aides, is helping students personally as well as academically. "As students develop relationships with the teachers, they start to tell about their home situations," she said. "When there are problems, the teachers can contact social services to intervene. And the busing in the program allows more children to stay after school for sports. Now they have a way home."

One of Rowan's community partners, from St. Andrews Episcopal Church, provides funding for mini-grants.

"The kids write a grant request for things like planting flowers in Brown Park, or gardening work at the nursing home," Gater said. "The grants often involve large groups of kids and teachers, and community members join in. The kids see it as giving back to the community."

Jackson Parents for Public Schools (PPS) has started a mentoring/tutoring program between eighth-graders at Rowan and former Rowan students now at Lanier High School. The connections are intended to help the younger students academically and socially with the transition to high school. Jackson PPS is working with Lanier and its feeder schools through a Ford Foundation grant.

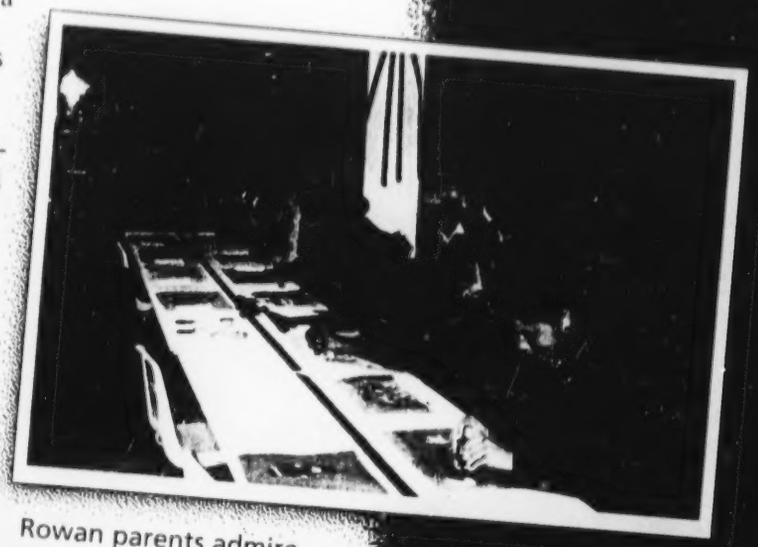
"We have held three large workshops on parent involvement training so far," said Mary Esther Schnaubelt, Jackson PPS executive director.

She said there are four steps, starting with home-based passive involvement. This includes caring for the child physically, setting a bedtime and finding a place to study. Second is school-based passive involvement, which means attending parent-teacher conferences and activities at school, joining the PTA, and participating in non-leadership activities.

The third step is active school-based involvement, such as volunteering in the classroom, organizing an event, serving as a PTA officer and anything else that is a leadership role at the local school. The final step is

"I want to let people know they can get involved with their kids' school. ... We need to get everybody together to work for all the kids."

PTA President Tony Collins



Rowan parents admire placemats made by students in an afterschool program.

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active involvement at the district level, which includes organizing parents to work for change for all the schools.

The afterschool coordinators understand the importance of parent participation.

"The first thing we do in our afterschool program is to set up a good relationship between the teachers and the parents," said Elana Tate, director of Brown's 21st CCLC program.

"During the summer we survey the parents to see what they want offered and ask if they want to come in and help teach knitting or cooking or dance. We had Mother's Day and Father's Day luncheons through the afterschool program. The kids loved having their parent or relative come to school for that."

According to Brown PTA President Tony Collins: "I want to let people know they can get involved with their kids' school. We have a tendency to be intimidated by the school. The parents and families of students don't want to step forward and say anything, but we need to get everybody together to work for all the kids."

Parents John and Mary Swanigen volunteer at Brown.

"We volunteer because we love kids," Mary said, "but it also helps us keep in touch with what our boys are doing when we're in contact with the school."

The educators in Jackson believe that children from low-income, disadvantaged families need family support and community support as much as individual support," according to Walton Principal Waters. "It's so important to bring families into the school," concluded Shae Goodman-Robinson, principal of Brinkley Middle School. "We can offer a lot that's academically inclined, and we can offer a moral structure from 8 to 3 and then during afterschool. But raising and educating a child is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week thing. Everybody needs to take part to build a foundation for a child. It's a partnership that takes place between the parent, school, child and community."■

— YOST

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Collaboration: The Name of the Game in Afterschool

By ANN YOST

The children in the summer/afterschool program in Barnwell, South Carolina, learned to swim over the summer months thanks to several volunteer swim instructors and a local woman who offered the use of her backyard pool.

And the Ohio Hunger Task Force (OHTF) used state money to contract with citizen-based organizations in 17 urban locations to provide programs for thousands of school-age children.

Both of these collaborations represent communities and schools coming together in an effort to increase commitment and spread responsibility for the education and care of children.

Collaboration between community and schools, whether it involves a handful of citizens or a statewide community organization, is becoming a viable and accepted method of bringing services, developing assets and generally creating afterschool programs and community centers.

The South Carolina collaboration involved a handful of individuals and

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Children practice for a recital in Lorain, Ohio.

Ohio Reads provides one-on-one instruction.

virtually no money. The Ohio program, prompted by a $10-million grant from the Ohio Department of Human Services through the Department of Education, involved scores of community-based organizations and school districts. But both represented partnerships and opportunities for children.

"Each collaboration is different," said Linda Nalte, director of Communities in Schools-South Carolina. "You need to get creative with collaboration."

The road to collaboration is not always smooth. Language differences between civic and school groups, turf battles and lack of trust are all potential obstacles.

In the world of afterschool programs, there are two kinds of collaboratives, said Martin L. Blank, senior associate at the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) in Washington, D.C. "There's the one where the school says, 'We are going to run the program the way we want to, and it would be great if you (community organizations) would be willing to supplement the program.' Then there's the other where the school says, 'We want a deeper partnership. We have to share resources.'"

Often the latter collaboration may mean that the community organization runs the program.

Communities in Schools-South Carolina has been chosen by the state Department of Social Services to operate a statewide afterschool initiative with government TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) dollars aimed at teen pregnancy prevention.

"What we do in these programs is try to build capacity locally," Nalte said. "We were chosen because the Department of Social Services wanted it [the program] to be community-based.... A lot of what we do at Communities in Schools is create partnerships through brokering and coordinating and bringing the community into the school."

Longstanding relationships in the community can contribute to the success of partnerships, such as the ones in Jacksonville, Florida.

The Jacksonville Children's Commission, a nonprofit organization created to manage tax money set aside for children and families, often collaborates with the school district. The commission manages a U.S. Department of Education 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grant and has contracted with Communities in Schools-Jacksonville to run nine of the district's 13 afterschool programs. Daily attendance averages 120 to 240 per school.

"Our role in the community is as a funder and convener, to bring entities together to care for children and support children and families," said Mary Freeland, commission executive director.

Said Jon Heymann, director of Communities in Schools-Jacksonville: "We helped design the afterschool programs and wrote the policy and procedure manuals for them. We provide busing, hire teachers (from the school district), provide meals, school resource officers, administrative staff. We are really a mini-school. Our program managers have offices at the school and are treated as assistant principals at the school sites.

"Our mission is to bring in services the schools cannot provide, to fill in the gaps. We and the school district divide the responsibilities. The district's administrators are flexible and do not act as if they are the only ones who can run a good educational program."

Collaboration, said IEL's Blank, needs to come from all aspects of the community including community-based organizations, neighborhood groups and faith-based institutions.

"If we can build partnerships, we can begin to share accountability for the results. School districts are sharply accountable for services to youth. But how do you measure accountability for other organizations? Schools must be accountable, but we need a broader and shared accountability for the well-being of our kids," he said.

"Partnerships allow us to think about ways to diversify funding and leadership, which leads to sustainability. In a partnership, professional expertise can be shared and work can become a vehicle for public engagement..... A partnership provides a mechanism for having a conversation about the needs of all children."

Ohio's Urban School Initiative lasted for two years and provided or enhanced 125 afterschool/summer programs. While OHTF has transitioned out of the mix, all programs continue.

"Each of the 17 urban school district sites designed different programs within the general guidelines of educational requirements, nutrition, enrichment, transportation," said William Dolan, task force executive director. "Some grew existing programs, while others started from scratch."

The Lorain and Elyria school districts chose Horizons Center in North Olmsted, a nonprofit child-care and education provider, to run their afterschool programs. Horizons Director David Smith said his center uses its own buildings when possible but also sets up programs in schools. He said it was a challenge to put an outside program into the school buildings.

"The problem is integrating the program into the teaching staff, custodial staff, with principals and administrators. Some teachers don't want anyone in their classrooms after school and you are bringing in a lot of exterior partners, too."

In addition, the last two weeks of the summer program had to be moved to public parks because school janitors were stripping the floors in preparation for the new school year.

Nevertheless, the problems were manageable, Smith said, considering the rewards of getting hundreds of kids involved in academic enrichment programs, such as Ohio Reads, dance classes, field trips, fencing and other activities. Horizons' ultimate goal is to create full-service family centers in the community.

The Urban School Initiative program required schools and their partners to have a 20 percent in-kind, corporate or foundation match. The purpose was to help build relationships and to force schools to work with community-based organizations and community-based organizations to work with the Department of Human Services.

The collaboration grew exponentially. It started with funding, then added the task force, then schools, then community partners. Those partners brought in other partners as teachers, guests or volunteers. The capstone, Dolan said, is pride in the results.

An evaluation of the Urban School Initiative by the University of Cincinnati showed a tremendous improvement in proficiency test scores, attendance and tardiness. The improvements began almost immediately.

"If we can build partnerships, we can begin to share accountability for the results."

Martin L. Blank,
Institute for Educational Leadership

"The community has a responsibility to ensure that every child is successful...."

Linda Nalte,
Communities in Schools

"When you ask stakeholders to describe us, they say we're a broker. We look at who needs it, who's got it and match them up, then get out of the way," Dolan said.

"For a collaboration to work, you have to have some piece of shared vision and an element of trust. It takes hard work and time. The big piece is communication. That's how you start to knock down barriers. Once new relationships are made, you can see common ground beyond the issue at hand."

Who should manage the afterschool initiative varies, according to IEL's Blank.

"In a rural district, it is often the schools because that is appropriate," he said. "In an urban district, sometimes it is the Boys and Girls Club, the YMCA, or others."

And sometimes the collaboration is densely layered.

The Wallace-Readers Digest Funds in New York City provided grant funding to adapt the Beacons school concept in Denver; Minneapolis; Savannah, Georgia; and Oakland, California. Beacons schools are comprehensive, school-based child and family development projects managed by community-based organizations and funded with a combination of city, state and private monies. The first Beacons were established by the Rheedlen Centers for Children in New York City.

In Minneapolis, the local YMCA is the fiscal agent and program manager, but the program works as a collaborative with the Youth Coordinating Board, city and school district. Beacons provides training, and the school district brings its funding from a 21st CCLC grant.

"The Y has done youth development well in our city. It has lots of credibility," said Doris Baylor, Beacons director.

"There's a very low-income population in the city that includes a large number of Hmong. We did a community assessment to find out what kinds of organizations the residents wanted. As a result, we have some centers run by the YM and YW, Boys and Girls Club, and the schools."

A strong factor in the Minneapolis collaborative efforts is training.

"We took 24 people to New York for training," Baylor said. "By the time we had shared rooms and gotten lost on the subway together, we had started the solid relationships needed for collaboration."

She said the same technique is used to train youths to work in the afterschool program.

"We hold a leadership training retreat for more than 200 youth. The retreat helps to clarify goals in the program as well as creating relationships.

"This initiative has allowed us to transcend organizations and really join hands to support youth and families. It is so refreshing because it is not business as usual. It is a collaboration, strong in commitment and very strategic in building relationships with the youth, families, school, community-based organizations, business community and city and state governments."

The Beacons program in Denver is run by a collaborative of the Rose Community Foundation in Denver, which oversees administration, fundraising, management and leadership; the Piton Foundation in Denver, which does capacity-building around youth development including training coordinators for the program; and the Denver Public Schools, which brings its 21st CCLC grant funds for three sites.

The sites are managed by three local community-based organizations: Mi Casa Resource Center, the Urban League and Catholic Charities. The organizations partner with teachers, parents and neighborhood organizations to form local decisionmaking councils.

"This collaboration process at a minimum has been good for opening the doors of the schools to the community," said Angela Powers, Beacons grant manager for the Rose Foundation. "The Beacons programs are not our only afterschool activities, but they are the first ones that have been managed by the community."

Partners include Denver University and the University of Colorado, which bring in tutors and pre-college programs for the kids afterschool, said Jenifer Federico, school liaison.

Denver has used its 21st CCLC funds not as seed money but to augment programs that were already strong, she said.

Blank said these community-school collaborations are really a vehicle for moving to a more comprehensive strategy that takes all funding streams and puts them together with community partners to ensure that all children who need afterschool programs, get them.

In Central Falls, Rhode Island, 30 to 40 percent of afterschool dollars are going into relationships with community-based organizations. Central Falls is one of the most densely populated areas in the United States, with a high immigrant population and an average family income of $18,000. Many services are needed.

School and Community Organized to Promote Excellence (SCOPE) was initially funded through the Wallace-Readers Digest Funds and managed by the United Way of Southeastern New England. It's now entitled "SCOPE/21st Century," to reflect a 21st CCLC grant.

Along with funding and administrative collaboratives, each school has a planning council composed of educators, parents and community members.

Project Hope, Rhode Island Children's Crusade, Rhode Island Expansion Arts, Rhode Island Youth Guidance and the YMCA are among the community-based organizations involved in "SCOPE/21st Century."

"The school district here has embraced the opportunity to learn and grow and evolve into more collaboration," said Christine Gingeralla, project director.

"There are phenomenal agencies here, and they have been scurrying around to provide services. This initiative has helped to coordinate and ensure more effective and positive impact from each of the agencies.

"The environment was set for things to happen. Each of our school sites has a school improvement team, and each is at a different level of development. SCOPE has been able to work with each of these because everyone recognizes a shared, common agenda."

Nationwide, the message is clear: The time for collaboration is now.

"Here in South Carolina, we have so many children who don't have equal opportunities to succeed. These collaborations with the community are a way to somewhat equalize that," said Communities in Schools' Nalte.

"I believe communities have to find their own solutions and look internally. I believe the school is part of the community. The community has a responsibility to ensure that every child is successful and assist the school in accountability and goals." ■

Beacons students enjoy fellowship at a retreat outside Minneapolis.

fterschool Is Our Village'

Jasmine Mayes builds a kite at Apache Elementary.

Jessica Cruz, a middle school student at Rio Vista Middle School in Bloomfield, New Mexico, starts her video with a shot of her home's front porch. The camera moves into the hallway and finally to a position across from where her parents sit on a sofa. Jessica, armed with questions, interviews her parents about their decision to adopt a baby. She finished the work by editing the tape and inserting still shots of herself and her siblings, including the newly adopted baby.

Meanwhile, three of Jessica's classmates, all members of the Bloomfield Rockies Little League baseball team, tell the story of their season by opening with tape from a professional game. It's like a dream sequence, with an overlay of the boys talking about their own team.

Both five-minute movies were made courtesy of Natalie Salvatore, a Farmington, New Mexico, teacher, media consultant and businesswoman who volunteered hundreds of hours to write manuals, choose equipment and teach video skills in a local afterschool program.

Salvatore's work demonstrates what one citizen can do for a multitude of youth. At the other end of the community-school collaboration spectrum in New Mexico is the San Juan County Partnership.

The partnership, according to Director Pamela Drake, is an agency that works on systemic change so that schools and the judicial systems do not operate in a vacuum, but have people working together. It manages the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant that was awarded to the Farmington schools for five afterschool program sites in three school districts — Farmington, Bloomfield and Aztec.

The partnership subcontracts with the Farmington Boys and Girls Club for much of the programming. Other activities and services come from individual volunteers and community groups.

Kelly Anderson is site coordinator at Rio Vista Middle School in Bloomfield. Anderson's advisory council includes the district superintendent, school principal, a teacher who specializes in behavioral issues, a police officer, and a Boys and Girls Club representative. The council is trying to recruit other community members.

Transportation is so vital in the rural community that some grant money was used to buy a bus for the Bloomfield Community Learning Center.

"We are right on the border of the Navajo nation, so we take the Navajo students home at night," Anderson said. Home is a dormitory 40 miles away from Rio Vista, where the children stay during the week. They return to their families' homes on the massive reservation on the weekends.

The ethnic mix in Bloomfield — mostly Navajo and Anglo with some Hispanic — sometimes makes collaboration difficult.

"Last year we [the afterschool program] got kicked out of our room for a week when the Navajo nation brought in dentists to work on teeth of the Navajo kids," Anderson said. "And at Christmas time, the tribe comes in and hands out clothes and packages only to the Navajo kids. The school is the only place where they are all together, but it is hard on the other kids."

Anderson said the program, which includes homework help, enrichment activities and field trips, has had wonderful results.

"We had a fifth-grade girl last year who had barely ever passed anything. Her main purpose for coming was to get her grades up. We helped her study, taught her how to use the dictionary, and, shortly after Christmas, she received her fifth 100 percent on a spelling test."

The program has been rewarding for adults, too.

According to Anderson: "One teacher told me at the end of the year about the change the afterschool program made for certain kids who would cuss at him in the hall. By the end of the year, those kids were acting friendly. The young man with the worst behavior came up at the end of school and gave the teacher a hug."

Said Drake: "Just getting these kids to be involved with an adult who is a positive role model is wonderful. The academics are great, but they also need to learn how to act and be socially appropriate and to feel good about themselves. In my opinion, that's the biggest thing we're doing in the program."

Farmington's afterschool program was held at the local Boys and Girls Club the first year. This year, the program moved into Apache Elementary, which will provide more space, according to site coordinator Alice Ellison.

Ellison has been relentless in trying to find local partners.

"The San Juan County Cooperative Extension Service has agreed to come in to do nutrition and cooking classes because there's a high rate of diabetes among the Native American population. We have an early intervention behavior health service that works with us," she said.

"The Farmington Public Library brings in a read and art program and the Girl Scouts are going to do a modified scout program. A volunteer from San Juan Community College is going to work with children to write and put on a play and make costumes for it, and another group of teen-agers volunteers as 'Homework Busters.'

"I'm familiar with digging through phone books and knocking on doors to get partners. Sometimes I feel like an old-fashioned Avon lady."

All the programs in Farmington include frequent field trips to give children new experiences.

"One of our goals with these kids is to increase their awareness through real-life experiences. We try to make dreams happen for them — like riding a horse, learning to do archery," Ellison said.

"This collaboration is helping everyone use resources effectively. The teachers are smiling. This is a place for them to refer children ... for clothes, services, counseling. We're offering an extended service and we're proud to be part of it."

She believes that a major reason for the success of the collaboration is because the community realizes that children are its most valuable resource.

"These children will be working in our community some day. It's a true collaborative action team between our program, the schools, the parents and the community. Kids today don't have the family and neighbors and community that I had when I was growing up. I love that saying, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' Well, we have the afterschool program. This is our village."

"Just getting these kids to be involved with an adult who is a positive role model is wonderful."

Pamela Drake, San Juan County Partnership

Mural Symbolizes Partnership

Children and seniors worked on the mural together.

To everything there is a season. And every season is a time for collaboration between community and schools in Barre, Vermont.

A mural created in 1999 by children and senior citizens depicts the four seasons and symbolizes the partnership between the Barre Public Schools and its community. Children who worked on the mural at Lincoln House, an independent living facility, came from CityScape, a 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) site operated by the Washington County Youth Services Bureau/Boys and Girls Club, a longtime community organization.

"It was a perfect collaboration," said P.J. LaPerle, assistant director for the CityScape program. "While they sketched, then painted the mural, the two generations learned about each other. The elderly told the kids about the great flood of 1927 and other events in their neighborhoods, and the kids brought them enthusiasm and creativity."

CityScape started in 1995 as an effort to help fifth-graders transition to middle school. The program was operated by the youth services bureau and the Barre School District with funds received through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

That funding ended in 1998 and the program faltered until the school district received a 21st CCLC grant from the U.S. Department of Education in March 1998. The grant allowed the district to re-energize, expand and enrich the program.

The youth services bureau also operates TownScape, a similar program in nearby Barre Town, and County Paths, which serves four nearby rural schools. TownScape, which started in 1999, and County Paths, which started in the fall of 2000, are both 21st CCLC grantees.

"Over the years, we have joined collaboratives and coalitions and built more layers and services for youth. By the time we worked on the 21st CCLC project [in Barre] with the school district, we had learned a lot about collaboration," said Carole Wageman, executive director of the Youth Services Bureau.

"An early mistake we made was to think that everybody was on board. We made the assumption that we [youth services bureau] are coming in as an outside agency with good stuff, and you [the school] should be happy about it. That is never the case. Every school has a political climate, and you have to learn their needs and agendas. A lot of time the school personnel think a project is just going to be more work for them."

So one of the first tasks in any collaboration is to identify the leadership and spend time getting to know them.

"We meet with everybody — first the administrators, then the teachers. The teachers and aides are the ones who know how to open the doors. We want to be partners and use dollars to enhance what they do," Wageman said.

"Our personal motto is 'Say what you mean and do what you say.' If we say we're not going to load this on you, then we don't. Successful collaboration comes down to respectful relationships with people. When those involved like and trust each other, it works."

The collaboration between community organizations and the schools is perfect for Barre, according to David Batchelder, co-principal of Barre Middle School.

"We have a tradition of volunteering in Barre," he said.

"It is a working-class community and our central industry is granite production. You can go down to a Little League field and watch a granite company owner volunteering alongside his employees.

"Our relations with city hall and the recreation department are great. We use their facilities at no cost. We open our buildings to all sorts of community groups. The Onion River Arts Council [a nonprofit that promotes learning about the arts] supplies artisans and guests for nominal fees."

Bill Merrylees, an enrichment specialist at the school, served as CityScape's liaison for two years.

"One of our great experiences (at CityScape) was with a community volunteer, Paul Verano, an editor at the local paper, who is a chess master. He spent hours teaching kids to play chess," Merrylees said.

"He made a huge impact on the kids. One boy, in particular, made a complete turnaround from disruptive behavior to a positive attitude and making the honor roll. He found something that fascinated him and experienced positive reinforcement around learning and that's what did it."

A highlight of the program was Family Chess Night at which Verano took on all chess players. Children teamed up with parents as Verano walked around the room playing at each board.

"Chess is a great vehicle for getting generations together," Merrylees said. "It is a microcosm of problem solving, goal setting and patience."

During CityScape's summer program, Merrylees and students built a hiking trail to be used by children and residents, again symbolizing the collaboration of school and community.

Just recently, Merrylees started a 21st CCLC center called Twinfield Learning Center, a school that serves the Plainfield and Marshfield communities.

"In this case, there was a parent enrichment group called Twinfield Cares," he said. "The parents took the initiative to do a door-to-door survey to find out what the community wanted and needed to have in place for families. The parents in the group assisted the school district with writing the 21st CCLC grant."

Although Twinfield Learning Center is new, Merrylees already has his eye firmly on building community partnerships with civic groups, restaurants, church groups, libraries, artist guilds and Goddard College in Plainfield. And in no time, he plans to make it a thriving example of how to bring schools and communities together for kids. ■

Shelly Wells supports the Twinfield Learning Center

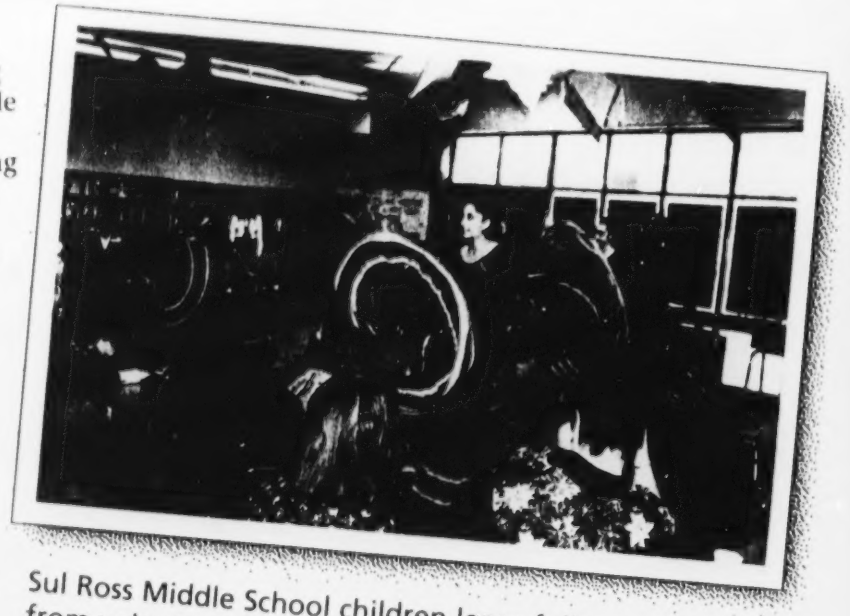
At the Heart of Everything

"Our philosophy is that the kids should give something back to the community, too."

Irene Alvarez,
Access 21
afterschool
program

After only one year as a 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC), Sul Ross Middle School in San Antonio offers 23 different afterschool classes, including GED and computer sessions. It also provides weekly professional counseling opportunities and dental services for the whole community, along with periodic health fairs, which include screenings and information sessions.

And according to community and school officials, including Irene Alvarez, director of the Access 21 afterschool program, collaboration is the reason for the program's quick success.



Sul Ross Middle School children learn folklorico from volunteers.

"We believe that school should be at the heart of the community," said Cathy Rhudy, director of adult and community education for the Northside Independent School District (ISD) in San Antonio. "And collaboration is at the heart of everything."

Sul Ross Middle School is one of three 21st CCLC sites that make up Access 21 in Northside ISD, all in urban empowerment zones. Community collaboration takes many forms, but all three can claim partnerships with neighborhood associations, social service organizations and the police department.

"Our community is mostly Hispanic, and 81 percent of the kids qualify for free or reduced lunches," Alvarez said. "The schools can't do the job of educating and raising children themselves; we've got to bring in the community. And our philosophy is that the kids should give something back to the community, too."

Sometimes it is as simple as letting people know what is needed or asking them what needs to happen.

"I asked the Ingram Neighborhood Association folks what the children could do

for them, and they said, 'Clean up the streets.' So we held a cleanup day and did just that," Alvarez said.

"We also did a survey to find out what people in the community want. They want help with poverty and with problems with children, including runaways."

In light of the survey, Access 21 provides a program called: "Hooked on Fishing Not Drugs." Kids learn to bait a hook with gummy worms and then are taken fishing at local rivers, lakes and a reservoir. One administrator offered his lake as a field trip site, something that Alvarez believes speaks to the many ways the school staff is a partner in Access 21.

There are other examples of collaboration as well:

- A local restaurant chain provides drinks for family night, while Access 21 provides cookies and entertainment, including folklorico and hip-hop dances for meetings in the community.
- The local homeowners association has offered to include health fair fliers in its newsletter at no cost.
- The Jewish Community Services organization agreed to provide a counselor during the afterschool and evening hours, so school counselors readily agreed to share their offices as a counseling center.
- Barrio Comprehensive, another local nonprofit community organization, agreed to buy a dental chair and equipment and to supply a dentist once a week for the community's use. Alvarez found a former storage room to accommodate the venture, and a counselor brought in a carpet remnant and some flower arrangements to make it look like a real office."

Children get hooked on fishing, not drugs.

The city has 16 school districts, many of them with collaborative afterschool efforts.

"We are all trying to involve the community in collaboration, and sometimes we find several school districts approaching the same large groups because of the way the city has developed over the years," Northside's Rhudy said.

She said implementing a program is always easier when there is some base to work with.

"We have been helped a lot by the fact that our district has a strong community education program and has had for 15 years.

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"We have a lot of collaborations in place with businesses and nonprofits. We had a lot of federal and state grants, including a family literacy program and homeless project that works closely with social services agencies. We have set up a vast network of collaborative services.

"The leadership in our district has always promoted a strong sense of community and the recognition that schools can't do it all. Schooling is more than what happens between 8 and 3:30; it includes parents, community, business partners, the school board and the superintendent."

A youth sports organization called National Youth Sports (NYS) collaborates with St. Mary's College and the Northside ISD for a six-week summer activity that involves nearly 500 San Antonio fifth- through eighth-graders.

NYS puts on a daily program at St. Mary's. NYS staff works with the children on sports and academics. They get health screenings, anti-violence and anti-drug workshops and are fed breakfast and lunch.

The afterschool program staff has to function independently of the schools, yet still be seen as a supportive arm.

"We like to hire teachers from the schools, and they are enthusiastic as they can do things with kids that they can't during the school day," Rhudy said. "We've learned to nurture the schools that we're in. Those folks are busy and need to be seen as valued partners."

Alvarez is so committed to school/community partnerships that she believes schools today cannot survive without collaboration.

"Parent participation at middle school level is very low. We need business and the community at large and we have to show them why and how they can benefit from such a collaboration." ■

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making afterschool count

spotlight

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Businesses, Schools Work Together

By ANN YOST

In the past, the term "school-corporate partnership" conjured up visions of simple things — a thank-you lunch or some new equipment or supplies.

But in recent years, with the increase of women in the work force and renewed awareness of the need for children to be supervised as well as enriched during the hours after the school bell rings, corporate-school partnerships have taken on new vitality.

In fact, the business world is seizing the opportunity to take the initiative in the afterschool arena, and it is paying off in big ways.

"There's a strong sense that the schools can't do it all, especially in inner-city school districts," said Steve Parson, director of the Institute for Urban Education Partnerships and a professor at Virginia Polytechnic

continued on page 2

Students at Colorfest 2000 at the Bernheim Arboretum in Kentucky.

21st CCLC Initiative

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative was established by Congress in 1997 with a $40 million appropriation to award grants to rural and inner-city public schools, or consortia of such schools, to enable them to plan, implement, or expand projects that benefit the educational, health, social services, cultural and recreational needs of the community.

School-based learning centers can provide safe, drug-free, supervised and cost-effective afterschool, weekend or summer havens for children, youth and their families. Federal grants awarded under this program may be used to plan, implement or expand community learning centers.

In 1998, the Charles

Institute and State University. "With today's culture of accountability, schools need all the resources they can get."

The institute focuses on inner-city communities and schools because they are the ones often left

Students work with corporate partners in Santa Ana, Calif.

behind in the partnership movement, according to Parson. In part, that is because people employed by corporations often live in the suburbs and naturally want to support the schools their own children attend.

"We're trying to get communities and schools to focus partnerships more on supporting academic achievement. We're encouraging things like mentoring and designing of learning activities," Parson said.

Businesses may have resources and people who can teach a particular course or area. For example, a nuclear physicist can bring an atom to life. These people can help connect what students are learning in classrooms to the real world. Educators don't want businesses to take over curriculum or teaching, but they appreciate a collaborative arrangement where schools can access people with particular skills.

In addition to developing specific training for inner-city schools, the institute searches for promising models of corporate-school relationships.

For example, in Mobile, Alabama, the school board found it necessary to cut partnership efforts from its budget. The business community responded by setting up an education foundation to serve as an intermediary between the business community and the schools. The businesses wanted to help the schools, but not just with funds.

"The foundation does a lot in terms of identifying what the schools need through polls and town meetings," Parson said. "It helps to focus partnerships and get the funding where it is needed."

Putting a Brain Trust to Work

Many parents are concerned about the lack of extended learning opportunities available to their children. At Jordan Park School of Extended Learning in Minneapolis, a K-8 facility, staff members have developed a "Brain Trust." Borrowing the term and a quote from Woodrow Wilson: "I use all the brains I have and all that I can borrow," they have invited business, as well as corporate and

community, representatives to sit on a council that develops opportunities for students.

"What happens is that in school, you get warped and only see things through certain lenses," said Jan Prohl, instruction design specialist for the school. "It's wonderful to have somebody from the outside. We are using corporate people for their minds because they tend to think differently than we do. It's a think tank for thinking out of the box."

Two years ago, upon returning from a writing seminar, an eighth-grade student said to Prohl, "I went to college yesterday."

"It made me realize that these children from North Minneapolis do not grow up with the dream of college the way other children do. I wanted to get that dream into place."

She took the idea to the Brain Trust, and the Jordan Park Scholars program was born.

"The representative from U.S. Bancorp Piper Jaffray Inc. [an investment banking firm] told us that if we raised some money they would invest it and set up a fund. We raised $10,000, then General Mills matched that giving the fund $20,000."

Piper Jaffray, General Mills Inc. and the Minneapolis Foundation are handling the Jordan Park Scholars Fund.

"There are certain standards for Jordan Park scholars, and we will be watching these kids as they go on to high school," Prohl said. "If they meet the standards, we will fund their education beyond high school. As long as the dream is there, kids will be working toward it, and more of them will go on to college."

Said Parson: "The concept embodies the idea that schools alone cannot do the job of preparing kids for the future."

Once they are gathered at the table, the school people lay down the needs they have, such as where children are not doing well. Then the community looks at what resources they have. When the partners can't help, they usually know someone else who can and bring that person or organization in.

Combined with Jordan Park's scholarship program is a mentoring program. Some 15 Piper Jaffrey employees work one-on-one with students.

"This is not an advisory group," said George Lansing, a retired physical education teacher who initiated the mentoring idea. Lansing and his wife, Darlene, work with the Brain Trust. "It is a group of sharp, successful people. We expose them to the school and let them go from there."

Said Darlene Lansing: "These kids do not have parents with networks and resources that they need. We were looking for a surrogate for that group. That's when we hit on the notion of bringing in people from the community. We've tried to get a diverse group, African American and white people working together."

"We didn't want their opinions," George Lansing said. "We want their brains."

The Brain Trust has included politicians, a state Supreme Court justice, business people and corporate representatives who meet about four times a year.

"Our community in North Minneapolis is largely fearful of schools and

Stewart Mott Foundation entered into an unusual private public partnership with the U.S. Department of Education to provide grants for training, leadership development, technical assistance and evaluation to support the initiative.

In December 2000, Congress approved an increase in this program to $851 million for the 2001 fiscal year. To date there have been more than 900 federal grants made to support programs in more than 3,600 schools nationwide. That number is expected to grow to more than 7,000 in 2001. The Foundation has pledged up to $110 million over seven years for this effort and also offers additional information on its Web site at www.mott.org.

"Corporations want to be part of a community."
—George Lansing

bureaucracy," George Lansing said. "The corporate connection brings in a non-school angle. Corporations want to be part of a community. Being a part gives them visibility on one hand, and corporations need to feel that they are donating something back to the community in some way, shape or form."

Long- and Short-Term Benefits

Many newly formed afterschool programs have yet to create partnerships with local businesses. But in central Kentucky several groups already are working with a dozen 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs partially funded by the U.S. Department of Education and operated through the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC), a consortium that provides services to 13 rural school districts.

Bernheim Middle School in Shepherdsville has become partners with its next-door neighbor, Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest. Children from the afterschool program go to the arboretum on learning expeditions. In October, 21st CCLC participants were presenters at the arboretum's Colorfest 2000.

The Shelbyville Chamber of Commerce and the Optimist Club of Eminence both support OVEC's afterschool Sports Club, a highly successful initiative that provides afterschool activities at 12 sites, according to Karla Gibbs, OVEC director of adult, family and community education. Middle-school children divide their time between sports activities and homework help or working in an educational computer lab called Lightspan. Attendance at schools that offer Sports Club has improved substantially over last year, Gibbs said.

"The Optimist Club provides money for incentives such as T-shirts and shorts and field trips," she said. "It sometimes puts on a barbecue for the kids and their families. The Chamber of Commerce gives us space in its new community center for sports activities and also for training activities for the providers."

In turn, the 21st CCLC staff keeps the community center open extra hours for the chamber.

"I believe our business partners understand that their support and involvement in our Sports Club initiative will result in both short-term and long-term benefits for the youth in their community," Gibbs said.

"In the short term, their support, both fiscally and personally, reinforces the importance of academic performance and the fact that each of the participants is a valued member of the community. In the long term, the youth we make a difference for today will be better prepared for the work force and life, and also will have a much stronger awareness of the importance and value of civic involvement." ■

Bridging the Gap in Santa Ana

When some 50 children and parents from Madison Elementary School in Santa Ana met with 40 volunteers from the Insurance Industry Charitable Fund (IICF) on a Saturday in October, their time together was truly a day at the beach. The group visited Crystal Cove, south of Newport Beach, for a day of instruction, experience and cleanup.

"After we toured a marine reserve, visited a dolphin birthing ground, talked about manmade pollution and cleaned up refuse from the beach, the children played in the shallow surf for about two hours," said Stephanie Barger, executive director of Earth Resource Foundation.

Barger, who had planned the activity for the IICF and school, had brought along a lot of beach toys. But they were still in the bus because they weren't needed.

"These children seldom get to visit the ocean even though our community is only about 15 miles away," said Madison Principal Martha Baker.

Beach Day was part of Bridge Week, held annually in California to bridge the gap between corporations and their communities.

Earth Resource Foundation sets up environmental programs for schools and brings in corporations to participate and to underwrite the cost.

"Corporations are understanding they have to get connected in their communities," Barger said. "The children represent their future work force, and the health of the community depends upon everyone getting involved. Involvement is

Beach Day was part of Bridge Week.

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also a morale boost for the employees. They are proud to work for a company that gets involved in the schools."

Barger learned about Madison Elementary through Ricoh Electronics, a local company of about 1,100 employees, which has made an annual donation of $4,000 to Madison for 10 years.

That partnership is about to blossom even more, Barger said, as Ricoh employees and school people undertake a major environmental program and campus beautification, which will include murals and painting at Madison in the spring of 2001.

Madison students gather at Crystal Cove.

"When you visit Madison, about half the school is trailers," Barger said. "The kids don't have a nice playground. There are huge shrubs that we want to take out, and we want to use that area to show the children how to plant flowers and other plants."

Two computer companies, FileNet Corp. and Broad.com, also partner with Madison.

FileNet has provided a 20-unit computer lab and software from the M.I.N.D. (Music Intelligence Neural Development) Institute as well as furniture for the lab and three more computers for each of the second grade classrooms.

The equipment is used for a school program based on the Mozart Effect, a concept that was co-created by Dr. Gordon Shaw of the M.I.N.D. Institute at the University of California at Irvine. All Madison second-graders are taught two piano classes, two math classes and a computer class each week, based on the theory that learning music improves the mind's ability to learn math.

"This program is done during the daytime hours at this point," said Principal Baker, "but we intend to move it into afterschool hours as we expand. The children need to practice the piano, and they do not have pianos at home."

According to Baker, the beauty of the program is that the children are learning to

conceptualize and understand math without using language.

"They are developing math abilities with spatial and temporal reasoning. It is especially useful for our children, many of whom are limited in English proficiency."

Madison music teacher Janet Schermer said the program is especially good for boys, who are notorious for not wanting to sit still and listen to a teacher.

"I don't think we're doing everything we can to reach kids," she said, "especially boys. This is a great program."

William Souza, director of Madison's 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool program, said the district has the largest Hispanic population in the country and the youngest mean age.

"Most of our students are first generation or immigrant children. The community doesn't have to use English outside of the school. Experiences like Bridge Week and other outside-of-school-activities provide a contextual, English-speaking experience for them."

Having corporate partnerships and a strong afterschool program is important not only to the students and families but also to the entire community, Baker added.

"These families are critical to keeping the economy going. Afterschool time with its opportunities for extended learning is so important. Teachers can raise expectations, but these kids have such an uneven start."

Broad.com sponsored its first Parent Institute in 2000 for about 170 parents.

According to Baker, "They were basically told, 'Your child can go to college.' Then they were taught how to work with the school staff and how to help a child get the best education and get into college."

Madison has funding and volunteers from lots of sources, but what makes them effective is being able to coordinate them, Baker said. With the 21st CCLC federal grant, the school hired a half-time resource, half-time staff coordinator. Being able to hire him to find new resources and to coordinate resources and staff has allowed the school to be much more effective in its partnerships. ■

"Afterschool time with its opportunities for extended learning is so important."

—William Souza

Partnership Sponsors Technology Training

The partnership between Emory Healthcare and the DeKalb County, Georgia, Schools started out as a traditional business-school liaison, but it has taken an exciting new twist.

"At first we provided money for banquets, T-shirts, celebrations, soft kinds of stuff," said Don Speaks, associate director for community affairs and market development for Emory Healthcare. "That's fine in advantaged communities, but in the area of Columbia Elementary, they needed more."

And DeKalb County Schools' Mindy DiSalvo, project director of the district's Family Technology Centers, knew just what to suggest.

"We asked Emory to sponsor one of our technology centers at Columbia," said DiSalvo.

Not only did Emory Healthcare agree to it, said Speaks, but also the company found a way to make the investment pay off for itself as well as the community and the school families.

DeKalb County Schools have 17 Family Technology Centers (with 54 corporate sponsors), most located in schools, but some in other community-based locations, including a homeless shelter. The centers are open 24 hours a week outside of school hours. They offer 19 classes including how to write a resume, how to talk with a child about violence, GED reading, basic-skills reading, and computer repair and operation.

The program was started with a seed grant from the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education. Additional funding has come from other grants, including funds from the U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative, which support 11 sites.

In addition to business partners, government funding and grants, DiSalvo gets donations from individuals.

"Businesses are looking for qualified people to hire," she said. "We want to make a difference in a child's life. We have bottom line numbers that show us that if we can employ a mother we can change a child's life."

That's where Emory Healthcare benefits. In Atlanta, there aren't enough people to do the work. The Woodruff Health Science Center, for which Emory Healthcare works, is the medical arm of Emory University. It needs a lot of people to fuel it.

"We have 1,000 jobs a month available and people are not trained to fill them," Speaks said. "We felt by partnering with the school district, we could prepare people for these jobs and others available in the Atlanta area. It's a situation where everybody wins."

Georgia Perimeter College, a system of junior colleges, partners with the technology centers by providing graduates with continuing education credit toward a degree.

Adults who attend classes are welcome to bring their children, because DeKalb County has provided child care with enrichment activities. Cost of the 15-week program is 15 volunteer hours spent in the school district.

"So far, in three years, we have had 41,000 volunteer hours paid," DiSalvo said. "It is another way to get people into the school buildings, to make them more comfortable in the setting."

The technology centers are improving outcomes for kids by helping their parents become employed or better employed.

At the end of each 15-week instructional cycle, there is a formal graduation ceremony.

"It is so important," DiSalvo said. "One man who had been living in a homeless shelter took three MARTA [city] buses, and he borrowed a golf shirt and tie in order to come to the graduation. ... Family members come with their cameras. It's really a turning point for a better job opportunity for these students."

DeKalb school officials reach out to those just out of high school as well as parents.

"A few years ago," DiSalvo said, "we had a young man who was a gang leader who went to his high school principal and said, 'I'd do something else if I knew how to.' The principal got him into the Family Technology Center, and he works for a technical firm now and has been drug-free for three years.

"We [the school district] decided to keep our program simple. We've stuck with what we know best. I'm an educator. We believe that if you want to make a difference in education you have to make a partnership with someone who can make a difference."

Every principal has developed a local advisory board, which includes a community member, a business partner, a student and a graduate of the program. Each program has its own personality and has shaped it to meet the needs of that community.

Each site is provided with hardware, courseware, supplies and materials, staff, and guest speakers. The schools provide the space.

A Family Technology Center will open in Columbia in January 2001 and will include courses specifically designed for prospective employees of a health-care company. Graduates of that program will be able to go to work directly for Emory Healthcare if they wish, said Speaks.

"More private enterprise has got to get involved in schools in a substantial way. We can turn 'troubled' schools around if we can help people with economic challenges and get kids interested in technology. By corporations and businesses adopting schools, we can work some of our needs into the curriculum and the classroom," he said.

"As we move into the 21st century global economy, this is a great opportunity for the playing field to be level. You turn on the computer and there is no race, no gender, no immigrant status. It's an exciting time." ■

"We believe that if you want to make a difference in education you have to make a partnership with someone who can make a difference."

—Mindy DiSalvo

Connecting Through Laptops

Every eighth-grader at Piscataquis Community Middle School in Guilford, Maine, is connected to an AirPort – not the aeronautical kind, but the technological kind, which sends out a beam that connects wireless computers with power. The 11 AirPorts and 117 laptop computers purchased by the school have allowed each eighth-grade student to have his or her own Apple iBook computer all day long.

"Our school is one of the first in the country to have the wireless computer system," said Principal Greg Bellemare, who also is 21st Century Community Learning Centers afterschool coordinator for Maine's School Administrative District #4.

More importantly, the computers have been a godsend for the rural district, helping to tie learning from community activities to the core school day.

The iBook initiative represents a partnership between the school district and Guilford of Maine, a 150-year-old international textile industry mill, which produces fabric, much of it for office furniture.

A state grant the district received in the fall of 1999 and used to purchase 17 iBooks, got the ball rolling. Around the same time, Maine's governor proposed supplying a laptop computer for each seventh-grader in the state. Although the proposal was never adopted, the idea

Third- and fourth-graders also have access to computers.

caught on with Guilford employees, who decided to take matters into their own hands.

The result was the offer of a $100,000 matching gift, which the district was able to match with 21st CCLC funds from the U.S. Department of Education to outfit the remaining eighth-graders with iBooks. In addition, seventh-graders at Piscataquis share 30 iBooks and fifth- and sixth-graders share another 25. Eventually, Bellemare said, the plan is to provide one computer for each child. The iBooks are kept, serviced and powered at the school.

"I think it's a wonderful idea for the corporate world to get involved in schools," said Mary Alyce Higgins, Guilford's vice president of human resources. "The tax money for schools comes from corporations, so we should be involved in their welfare. Educators and business people often don't understand each other. Linking the two is a good way to bridge that gap."

According to Bellemare, the computer initiative has dovetailed nicely with the district's 21st CCLC programs, particularly the summer programs, which have included reading and lessons on themes such as Native Americans and Maine history.

"The work in the summer programs had a huge impact on the learning going on now with the laptops," he said. "The reading levels have improved, and the attitudes toward school have improved. There is much more of a feel of community in the schools."

The district has made a point of helping teachers explore the learning possibilities presented by iBooks. Teachers have been trained on how to use them and the district has sponsored in-service workshops to share more information about how to use laptops effectively in the classrooms.

The majority of Guilford of Maine's 500 employees live in Guilford, according to Higgins.

"We are the least-populated county in the state. Our county is as big as Connecticut, with about 14,000 people. We are next to last as far as most economic indicators, so we wanted to do something for the community. We also are looking at the situation selfishly, in terms of future employment."

Higgins, who recently was appointed to serve on a governor's task force on

"I think it's a wonderful idea for the corporate world to get involved in schools."

—Mary Alyce Higgins

Piscataquis students also participated in an "outdoor adven

technology in the schools, said the state has two philosophies about bringing technology to the schools: One way is to mandate something to happen, and the other is to let the schools do their own thing.

"We [the task force members] are trying to find the middle of the road. In Guilford, the district was already providing some technology and laptops, and we contributed to the plan."

According to Bellemare, Guilford of Maine's role in helping the schools help children is critical.

"Our school district is shrinking. We graduated 89 students this year and there are only 45 kindergarteners. It's difficult, if not impossible, to sustain programs, like the afterschool and summer programs, when the loss in numbers of students means a loss in funding from the state."

"Guilford is a very progressive company. As well as wanting to help the children learn better, it also is helping them to be more technically savvy than children coming out of other school systems. This should help our children get good employment when they graduate, and it is a good community development-type strategy. We hope to entice companies and corporations to want to settle in this area because of the well trained workforce they will find here." ■

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